CHAPTER 3

The Social Roles and Functions of Emotions

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Emotions are complex, structured phenomena. They are not mere feeling states, that is, intraindividual states of conscious awareness that might as well remain within the confines of the individual's mind. They are parts of the very process of interacting with the environment. They are affective responses to what happens in the environment and cognitive representations of the event's meaning for the individual. They are, first and foremost, modes of relating to the environment: states of readiness for engaging, or not engaging, in interaction with that environment. It will be difficult to understand the social role of emotions if these are not, from the outset, viewed as dynamically changing, structured elements in ongoing interchanges, which both influence and are influenced by the other elements in these interchanges, such as the external events and the attitudes and actions of the other individuals involved.

Emphasizing the composite and structured nature of emotions is important because it implies that emotions can be described and not

merely labeled. Emotions (i.e., these descriptions) thus can be compared with one another without much concern for the labels used. When looking at the literature (see Mesquita & Frijda, 1992, for review), one is struck by the extent to which cross-cultural emotion psychology is plagued by a preoccupation with emotion labels. True enough, emotion taxonomies differ (Russell, 1991). However, focus on categories and labels tends to obscure the structural similarity of processes that are labeled or categorized differently in various societies. Differences in labeling may be due solely to the fact that a given emotional process can be labeled or categorized in many ways, depending upon which of its several components is taken as the basis for categorizing. Therefore, to assess social factors in emotions themselves, the emotional phenomena should be discussed as structures described analytically.

In this chapter, we discuss the ways in which the sociocultural environment can be expected to influence the emotion processes, the roles and functions of these processes in social interaction, and the influences of the sociocultural environment upon those roles and functions. That is, we discuss the modes of influence on emotions of the immediate context of social interaction in which emotions arise and of the values, norms, and cognitive customs prevalent in a given culture. Before doing that, we briefly outline the conception of emotions that guides our analysis.

Emotion Theory

The Emotion Process

Emotions occur when an event is appraised by the individual as relevant to his or her concerns. The process by which this takes place may be represented as a sequence of steps, each involving one or several components. The sequence is illustrated in Figure 1. Events are encountered and coded in terms of the knowledge and event categories available to the individual. Appraisal processes scan whether the events are relevant to one of the individual's concerns. The emotion process proper begins when an event is indeed appraised as relevant—as favorable or harm-

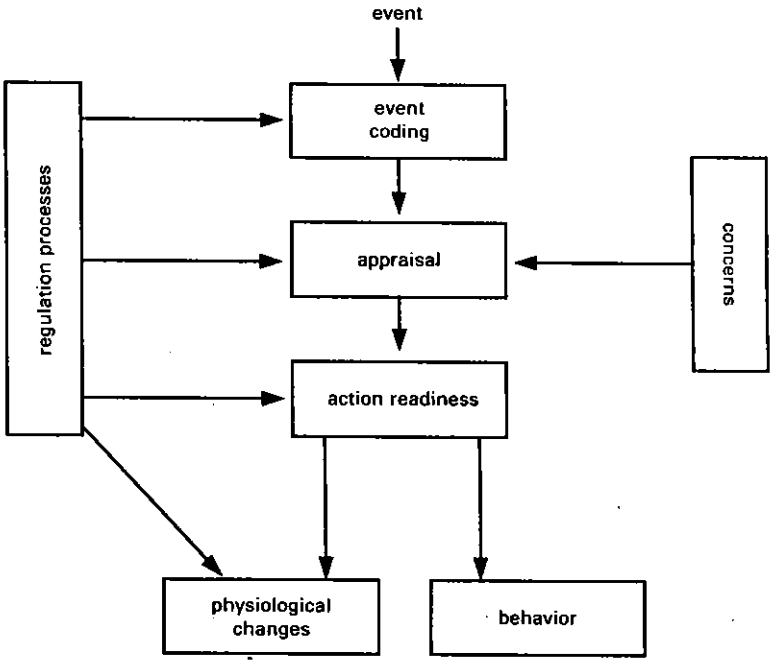

FIGURE 1. Emotion process.

ful—to one or to several concerns. Particular patterns of appraisal then lead to particular changes in action readiness and to concomitant physiological changes, which form the core of the emotional responses. However, regulation processes modify the outcomes of the various subprocesses and, thus, may attenuate, inhibit, or enhance the resulting responses in an event.

Two additional processes may occur that bear as a whole on the process as described. First, the emotion may become a focus of a higher order evaluation with regard to its individual or social desirability, which is one of the inputs for the regulation processes. We refer to the resulting evaluation as the emotion's *significance*. Second, the individual may categorize his or her emotion process, or any of its elements, and label it

with an emotion term such as "anger," "sorrow," or "jealousy." The categorizing and labeling process does not necessarily take all the components of the sequence into account; hence, a given emotion process can be labeled in different fashions. Labeling is considered to be important in the emotion process because how we label our emotions may influence our evaluation, and thus the emotion's significance and the regulation processes. In what follows, we examine in some detail each of the components.

Concerns

Emotional evaluations derive from an individual's concerns, that is, from his or her goals, motives, values, and sensitivities. *Concerns* is a convenient general term to denote an individual's (short- or long-term) dispositions to prefer particular states of the world or of the self. Emotions are elicited by events that are relevant to one or more of the individual's concerns.

Emotions can be considered to be processes that serve to monitor and safeguard the individual's concerns (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Scherer, 1984). That indicates their function. The emotion that we call *fear* signals a threat to the concern that is involved in the emotion-eliciting event: one's physical integrity, one's prospect of success, the stability of one's intimate relationship with a particular individual, a particular social goal one has identified with, and so forth. The emotion called *anger* signals (among other things) actual or impending offense to such a concern. *Joy* signals that an event means achievement of satisfaction with regard to a given concern or a promise that such achievements are within reach.

One may say that behind each occurrence of an emotion, there is a concern (or several concerns) giving to the event its meaning and its power to elicit emotion. A given event, such as walking around unveiled or unclothed, elicits shame because the individual subscribes to a value condemning such behaviors, or because he or she desires to belong to the group and not be rejected. Another event, one's national flag being torn down and trodden upon, causes indignation because this conflicts (and only when it conflicts) with the desire for respect for one's national

grandeur and the symbols that symbolize that. Others may not have such a desire and thus lack that particular emotional sensitivity.

Appraisal and Action Readiness

Emotions signal the relevance of events for favoring or harming one or several of one's concerns. They signal such relevance to the cognitive apparatus and the action system. What is usually referred to as *emotions* are, primarily, processes of appraisal of events as relevant, leading to processes of changes in action readiness and eventually to behavior (often, to physiological arousal as the logistic support of such readiness and behavior). *Appraisal*, as used in this chapter, refers to the appraisal of an event as positively or negatively relevant (primary appraisal), as well as to the assessment of further aspects of the event that are relevant for dealing with it (secondary appraisal). *Action readiness* means the state of readiness (or unreadiness) for achieving a particular change in the subject–object interaction or for interacting with the environment in general.

The term *appraisal* applies to processes that occur during actual encounters with specific events and is related to the picking up (or having expectations of) specific features in the interaction with the specific event. Sensing, recognizing, or interpreting the event as a source of pleasure or pain, now or in the future, is what constitutes primary appraisal. Evaluating the event as an actual or potential threat, as signaling unalterable loss, as being caused by a responsible causal agent, or as due to one's failure or transgression of some norm, implies secondary appraisal. These appraisals involve assessing the event with regard to dimensions such as causal agency, uncertainty about the event's outcome or implications, controllability or uncontrollability, and effort required for dealing with the event. Supposedly, these dimensions of "secondary appraisal" are relevant to the emergence of the various forms of action readiness, so that the appraisal of blaming a responsible agent leads to arousal of hostile action tendencies, the appraisal of an event as a potential threat leads to avoidant or self-protective action tendencies, and so forth.

Appraisal implies these evaluative and cognitive processes and not necessarily their conscious results. Conscious appraisal may, in some

cases, be at variance with the appraisal process that elicited the emotional response (Frijda, 1993b). Nevertheless, appraisal processes and the particular appraisal involved in particular emotions are usually inferred from subjective reports of how the encounter is experienced. However, another source of hypotheses concerning appraisals is the way in which a particular event is treated by the individual (e.g., as a source of threat to be avoided, as the cause of harm to be opposed, and so on).

The processes of appraisal can take various forms. Primary appraisal, the evaluation of an event as positive or negative, extends from the automatic processes involved in primary affective responses to tastes, smells, pain, familiarity, and so on, to the no less automatic processes of anticipation through previous experience, and to the complex interpretative processes involved in understanding the implications of a given situation (e.g., interpreting a found handkerchief as a sign of possible infidelity, or understanding a certain behavior as showing a lack of respect that, in turn, is felt to imply a loss of one's social status, as it would be in Bali; Keeler, 1983). In many cases, the affective valence of the event is implied by the concept in terms of which the event is understood, and primary appraisal follows directly from the way in which the event is coded. We return to this in the next subsection.

Action readiness in emotion consists of readiness for relating or not relating to the environment. Basically, emotions are phenomena of readiness or unreadiness for interaction. The various forms that action readiness can take demonstrate this. They include general activation and deactivation that have interest and disinterest in the environment as one of their major aspects; exuberance in joy, depressed apathy and anomie, and generalized inhibition in anxiety provide illustrations. The variations in action readiness also include action tendencies, distinguished by their relational intent, and the modification of the subject–object relationship that they imply: acceptance or rejection of stimulation (as in joy or interest and in aversion), change in the power relationship with a given person (as in anger and guilt), self-protection from a source of threat (as in fear), or maintaining or breaking proximity with a person or object (as in affection or anger).

Modes of action readiness, too, are inferred from self-report, from behavior, or from both. They are constructs derived from (the lack of) impulses and inclinations felt as well as from the constructs advanced to account for the variety of behaviors having a similar relational sense. For instance, hypoactivation is a plausible inference from avowed disinclination to act, from expressed or manifest disinterest in one's surroundings, from hypotonic facial expression, and from behavioral apathy.

Under the appropriate circumstances, action readiness gives rise to overt behavior: expressive, instrumental, and verbal behavior of diverse kinds. The hostile impulse of anger can be expressed by violent movements and a fierce glance, by shouting, by fighting or poisoning, by blackmail or black magic, or by breaking contact. It can also give rise to cognitive behaviors, such as ruminating and thinking hostile thoughts, and to enhanced tendencies for particular modes of appraisal, such as the tendency for causal attribution (Gallagher & Clore, 1985). Which modes of behavior are shown depends supposedly on the precise circumstances and on the models for behavior found in the social environment. Whether or not any behavior is manifested depends on the reasons for and habits of inhibition and self-control.

Event Coding

Usually, appraisal processes are elicited by the particular meaning of an event rather than by the nature of the event per se. The majority of events that elicit emotions do so through their associated meanings, as grasped by the individual and as defined by the culture or the past history of the individual. Usually, associated meaning is what renders events relevant for some concern and, hence, gives it positive or negative valence. Understanding a particular remark as an insult renders it harmful for social prestige and, thereby, offensive; coding bodily contact as an instance of taboo makes such contact relevant for one's concerns regarding the avoidance of social, moral, or divine punishment.

We use the notion of *event coding* to recognize the fact that coding processes often intervene between events as such and their emotional appraisal. In particular, the notion serves to emphasize that cultures pos-

sess explicit verbal categories to identify classes of events with particular associated meanings and affective evaluations. Insult is one such category, personal loss is another, and success, a third; shameful behavior, affront to God's honor, magic spells, impure food, terrorist attacks, and actions of the "Great Satan America" are others. As Parkinson and Manstead (1992) indicated, such categories imply affective evaluations. Concern relevance is socially defined and embodied in the semantic network surrounding the concepts. Events coded as terrorist attacks or shameful behaviors are indubitably bad; events coded as actions of freedom fighters are indubitably good (Fisk, 1991). Concepts of this kind are represented by affective schemas, as analyzed by Fiske (1982) and Fiske and Pavelchak (1985).

Although event coding often implies appraisal of the event, it is useful to distinguish these two processes. First, not all appraisals result from event coding; the affective valence of physical pain is more primitive than that, even if event coding (pain interpreted as offense to self-esteem or as a threat to health) may drastically alter its emotional effects (Tursky, 1974). Second, event coding does not necessarily lead to actual emotional appraisal. One may be personally indifferent to the Great Satan and his actions, even when one knows these to be considered bad. One has to appraise the coded event as real and as actually involving one's interests to experience an emotion. As indicated, appraisal is tied to the specifics of the individual's encounter with a particular event: the insult as delivered here and now by a particular offender, or the specific context in which a terrorist attack is reported to have taken place. The notion of appraisal refers to the fact that, if an emotion is to occur, the event's goodness or badness, or pleasantness or unpleasantness has to be felt to engage the individual and to do so in the specific interaction (in fact, receiving an insult may be appraised as emotionally positive when it is felt to signal victory over the offender in a power struggle). Emotion, in the sense of change in action readiness or upset, is evoked only when such features, including those of secondary appraisal, are involved (Frijda, 1986, 1993b).

Be that as it may, event coding usually is an important phase in the emotion process. Event coding is highly dependent upon event categories distinguished in the language and upon socially elaborated, prescribed,

or transmitted meanings. A given event (bodily contact between relatives, offense to social status, illness) may be coded differently in various cultures. Different codings may relate similar events to different concerns and, thus, give rise to different emotions.

Significance

Emotions include a further aspect, namely the emotion's *significance.* Significance is the meaning of the emotion itself for the individual, and this meaning may be of situational, individual, or social origin. Individuals often attach a particular significance to the emotion that they experience. The implications of having a particular emotion at a particular moment is itself an emotional event, relevant to other concerns than those that made the emotion arise in the first place. These other concerns include higher order concerns or principles, on the basis of which individuals monitor their behavior (Carver & Scheier, 1990). The emotion's significance forms part of a person's emotional experience and determines emotion regulation. Being proud of one's anger modifies the experience of that anger as well as its manifestations.

The significance of emotions is, we think, accessed largely through the emotion's label; to a large extent, it derives from the "emotion script" (Fischer, 1991) that is linked to the category under which the person subsumes his or her emotion. To an important extent, it is through emotion significance that cultural models and norms affect individual emotional experience.

Three kinds of significance may be distinguished, or three types of meanings that can accrue to particular emotions or emotion manifestations: meanings regarding the social effects of emotions, norm- and self-compatibility, and social cohesion.

First, emotions have social consequences. Certain emotion manifestations have direct social effects; the individual, by and large, knows this (Fischer, 1991), and it influences the tendencies to express or suppress. Anger provides the clearest example. Anger is meant to repulse or restrain others, and it often coerces or upsets (Kerkstra, 1984). Many of these effects are part of the culture's prevailing emotionology. Anger, for instance, may have effects that are more or less appropriate in a particular

culture, in a given social environment, or in a particular interpersonal situation.

Social effects are not restricted to anger. Grief and weeping tend to elicit caretaking or compassion (Murray, 1979) and often even tolerance for slightly deviant behavior. Guilt emotion sometimes serves as an apology, and it often coerces others into feeling guilty in turn (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, in press). In many circumstances, joy seems to invite participation of others and eagerness to share in the event. These effects are largely dependent on overt manifestation of the emotion, and they form the basis of the important self-presentational functions of emotional expressions: Emotional expressions may be enhanced, attenuated, or faked for self-presentational reasons (Laux, 1986; Laux & Weber, 1990). Self-presentation is one of the important shaping powers of emotional expression, in addition to general display rules. The social effects of emotions are not always or entirely dependent upon overt expression, though. A claim on other people's consideration may be made by the sheer loss and one's concomitant feelings of sorrow; guilt emotion can be used coercively by the verbal utterance "You make me feel guilty"; sorrow often carries the expectation that others should be compassionate or considerate, which sometimes is enough for the subject to feel abandoned or slighted when it is not forthcoming. These mechanics are known from family therapy (e.g., Pincus, 1973).

Second, norms exist with regard to having or not having particular emotions (e.g., anger in eighteenth-century New England; Stearns & Stearns, 1986), to having or not having particular emotions in particular situations (Hochschild's, 1983, feeling rules), and to showing or not showing the expression of particular emotions in either general or particular circumstances (e.g., weeping in intimate personal relationships; Ekman & Friesen's, 1971, display rules). Such norms can be assumed to be of both social and individual origin. In addition, and partly independently of the former, there are the individual's evaluations of whether or not his or her emotions or the expression of them are compatible with his or her self-image and self-ideal (Julien Sorel, in Stendhal's [1830/1991] *The Red and the Black*, wanted to be self-controlled and self-possessed; Lord Jim, in Joseph Conrad's [1900] book, expected himself to be fearless and

courageous). An individual may be amazed by the indignation that one may find him or herself capable of.

What is interesting, both with regard to social effects and norm- and self-compatibility, is that these forms of significance can be assumed to depend both upon cultural emotion scripts (Fischer, 1991) and upon individual history and standards. The two may be at variance with one another. Also, individual norms and self-standards may cover emotions or emotion manifestations that cultural emotionology is silent about. Of course, here as elsewhere (cf. Frijda & Jahoda, 1966), the existence of recognized cultural scripts or norms does not preclude large interindividual variety within the group with regard to subscribing to the norms or adhering to them. It would be interesting and useful to obtain more insight into the varieties concerned.

The third form of significance relates to social cohesion. Emotions may separate individuals from others, or they may join them to others. They may be of a nature to keep them private, or to share with particular others, or to share them generally. In The Netherlands, shame tends to be an emotion that one shares only with intimate others and, at least in one of our studies, less frequently than other emotions (35.5% did not share shame before reporting it in the questionnaire study, as compared with 9.7% for the emotions of joy, anger, sadness, and fear; Moorkens, 1991). The cohesive effect of fear (Schachter, 1959) would appear to differ according to whether the others are or are not under the same threats. In Anglo-Saxon and Germanic cultures, grief upon loss is either moderately shared or kept mostly private. Cultures thus tend to differ in this regard, the classical illustration being Granet's (1922) analysis of mourning prescriptions in pre-World-War-I China. The expectation of difference leads to research that in part confirms and in part contradicts these expectations or, at least, leads to modifying them. Mesquita (1993), for instance, did not find so many clear-cut differences in sharing emotions as expected.

Emotion Labeling

Emotion labels may attach to any of the above components of the emotion process or to any combination of these. Major emotion labels, in English

and in several other Western European languages, tend to be attached to combinations of appraisal and action readiness (Frijda, Kuipers, & Terschure, 1989). *Fear*, for instance, primarily categorizes the appraisal of threat. *Anger* would seem to categorize primarily the appraisal of an event as unpleasant and willfully caused by someone else, and as the action readiness to oppose or retaliate. *Furious* is defined almost solely by the action readiness for vehement overt expression. However, many emotion labels are based upon the particular type of eliciting event, as coded in the culture. *Jealousy* is an example in English (it cannot be defined other than by a threat-by-a-third-party kind of event coding). Bodily arousal may also on occasion be decisive for the labeling of an emotion. Such is the case for *pent-up*, in English, or *liget* in the language of the Philippine Ilongot that, to judge from Rosaldo's (1980) report, denotes diverse experiences of high arousal. Among the experiences so labeled is that which members of Western cultures would label as anger, or its equivalent. In other words, emotion labels may differ with regard to the components of the emotion process that they point to primarily, and which label is applied depends, perhaps, upon the aspect of the sequence that the subject or the onlooker focuses on. It also depends on the available labels and on the availability of those labels. English possesses jealousy that singles out the event, but other languages may not possess an equivalent and may have to be content with an equivalent of anger or upset (the Ilongot would have to settle for *liget*). As to the possibility of an emotion word involving primarily emotion significance, an emotion word denoting bad emotions is at least conceivable, and the Ifaluk word for justified anger (Lutz, 1988) explicitly has *significance* as one of its components.

It should be added that emotion labels tend to denote the various emotion components in a probabilistic, "prototypical" fashion (Fehr & Russell, 1984; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). That is, if an emotion category is defined by several components, the label for this category may be considered applicable when any sign for any of these is present to a sufficient degree. An emotion is called *sorrow* when one responds with any sign of emotion to an unmodifiable loss of something valued, or when one feels the urge to cry, or when one is drawn into

apathy (or when one sees someone else respond to an event likely to be appraised in this fashion, or sees him or her crying or apathetic), or when there is any combination of these.

Dimensions of Emotion Variation

Cultural differences may appear in any of the components mentioned above. People and cultures may also be highly similar in these regards. To illustrate these points, we describe some results from our own recent work (Mesquita, 1993) that compared respondents from Surinamese, Turkish, and autochthonous Dutch groups living in The Netherlands. First, we conducted an open-ended interview in which spontaneous reports of emotions were collected from the three groups of respondents. To control for different styles of spontaneous reporting, an emotion questionnaire was subsequently developed. The respondents were presented with five situations determined in previous research to be relevant to the emotional experience of the individuals in all three groups. Two situations were positive (Situation 1, compliment by others; Situation 2, social recognition), and three others were negative (Situation 3, personal offense by an acquaintance; Situation 4, personal offense by a close other; Situation 5, unfair treatment by a close other). For each of the situations, the questionnaire contained items designed to assess, among other things, (a) appraisals, (b) the perception of "obviousness" of the meaning of the relevant social situation, and (c) the extent of social sharing of the felt emotions. Respondents recalled their own personal experience that fitted the given description and answered these questions. For all questions, 3- or 5-point rating scales were provided. We interviewed about 90 respondents from each of the three groups. Interviewers were all women from the same cultural backgrounds as the respondents.

Appraisal Similarities and Differences

We mentioned that appraisals can be described as patterns of values on a limited set of appraisal dimensions: valence, certainty, controllability, agency, and so on. There is increasing evidence that many dimensions in this set are universal. Research on Western, Chinese, Indonesian, and

Japanese subjects suggest that the same dimensions are important, to about the same degree, to distinguish the various emotion categories (Markam, 1992; Mauro, Sato, & Tucker, 1992). In other words, whereas the emotional events that elicit emotions and the significance of emotions may differ appreciably from one culture to another, the elements of appraisal appear to be highly similar (Ellsworth, chapter 2, this volume). For instance, magical spells are elicitors of fear in certain cultures and not in others (Scherer, Wallbott, & Summerfield, 1986), and violent anger upon an insult is approved of in Albania, both by the individual and by society (Black-Michaud, 1975), and strongly rejected among the Utku Inuit (Briggs, 1970). The emergence of fear caused by a magic spell, like that of the announcement of dismissal from one's job, is due to the event's negative valence, the prospect of uncertain future harm, and the uncontrollability of the event. The anger in Albania as well as among the Utku (or in the perception of the Utku) is due to the experience of frustration or harm attributed to the action of a responsible other.

Not only do the dimensions of appraisal appear to be general, but major patterns of appraisal also do. The core meaning of most emotion terms in a given language can be reasonably explained in English; the explications, apart from describing event types, describe appraisals (and perhaps modes of action readiness). The emotions aroused by particular emotionally relevant situations (such as being insulted by a good friend or relative) tend to involve highly similar appraisal patterns in different cultural groups (for instance, Surinamese, Turks, and autochthonous Dutch in The Netherlands; Mesquita, 1993).

At the same time, there is evidence that cultures differ in the emphasis upon one or the other of the appraisal dimensions. Mauro et al. (1992) found such difference in the dimension of controllability: Controllability ratings of emotion incidents were significantly different between American and Chinese subjects, with Japanese subjects falling in between. Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that the implications of events for the relationship to close others, instead of only to the self, may be more pronounced in subjects from *interdependent* cultures. Solomon (1978) suggested that the much-mentioned low level of anger in the Utku

Eskimos is due to the low level of blaming others, that is, of causal agency attribution (see Mesquita & Frijda, 1992, for additional examples).

Differences in emphasis on particular appraisal dimensions have also emerged in our own research in The Netherlands (Mesquita, 1993). In open interviews with respondents of the Surinamese, Turkish, and autochthonous groups, spontaneous reports of emotions appeared to contain more frequent reference to social aspects of meaning in the Surinamese and Turkish groups than in the Dutch. This finding suggested that Turkish and Surinamese respondents appraise emotional situations more readily in terms of social dimensions. The results might also be explained, however, by different styles of spontaneous reporting. To reduce the possible effects of different reporting styles, emotion questionnaires were developed that included appraisal scales used successfully in cross-cultural research. This way the reported appraisals in different cultures would be more comparable, and the hypothesis of cultural differences in appraisal propensity could be tested more properly. To avoid problems of word equivalence, emotion instances were elicited by means of descriptions of types of situations. Respondents were asked to recall a situation that fitted the given type, and then gave answers to questions containing 3- or 5-point scales.

Some of the results pertaining to appraisal are given in Table 1, which summarizes the answers to three questions designed to assess the appraisal of intent by the others involved in negative emotional episodes (Situations 3, 4, and 5). These questions were not asked for positive emotional episodes (Situations 1 and 2). Respondents from the Surinamese and Turkish groups appeared to be more inclined to appraise the emotional events on their social dimensions. They appeared to evaluate other people's negative behaviors more in terms of power relationships than did the Dutch subjects. They attributed more intent to people who had hurt them and assumed more often that those people meant to better themselves by what they had done to the subject. Furthermore, other data indicated that both positive and negative events were assessed more readily as being relevant to their social prestige and to that of one's family and one's group. The cultural differences in the readiness to appraise

TABLE 1
Availability of Intent Appraisal

	Dutch	Surinamese	Turkish	
Situation 3: An acquaintance, a neighbor, or colleague offended you, did not take you seriously, or was inconsiderate toward you.	(n = 30)	(n = 30)	(n = 30)	F
Was the other person aware of what his/her behavior would mean to you?	1.2	2.2	3.1	**
Did the other person do it on purpose?	1.4	3.0	3.0	**
Did the other person do this to profit?	1.6	2.8	3.1	**
Situation 4: Your partner, an intimate friend, or a close relative offended you, did not take you seriously, or was inconsiderate toward you.	(n = 30)	(n = 29)	(n = 24)	F
Was the other person aware of what his/her behavior would mean to you?	1.1	2.4	1.8	*
Did the other person do it on purpose?	1.4	2.4	3.0	**
Did the other person do this to profit?	1.6	2.1	3.5	**
Situation 5: Your partner, an intimate friend, or a close relative treated you unfairly or improperly.	(n = 28)	(n = 30)	(n = 30)	F
Was the other person aware of what his/her behavior would mean to you?	1.2	2.2	2.1	
Did the other person do it on purpose?	2.6	2.2	2.5	
Did the other person do this to profit?	1.9	2.9	2.7	*

Note. Means of 4-point rating scales: 1 = not at all, 4 = entirely so.
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$.

events along social dimensions may relate to differences in the degree of psychological independence and interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). There are indications that the Dutch have more independent selves, whereas the Surinamese and the Turks have more interdependent selves (Mesquita, 1993). Thus, the results suggest that in the two cultures in which the emphasis is on relationships with other people, emotional appraisals include social dimensions more readily, whereas appraisals in the culture in which independent selves are dominant are less likely to include social dimensions. The degree of psychological interdependence, supposedly significant to the readiness for social appraisals, may be a characteristic inherent in the different cultural backgrounds. It should be recalled, however, that the Turkish and Surinamese respondents were

members of ethnic minority groups. Being an ethnic minority may in itself contribute to psychological interdependence (Rabbie, 1992).

Concern Differences

We stated the general notion that emotions are elicited because events are appraised as relevant to some concern. Concerns constitute another source of interindividual and intercultural variation in emotion. One may assume that individuals of all human groups share a number of basic concerns, such as those for physical health and the absence of pain, self-esteem, and the integrity of one's attachments. But differences, in intensity as well as in kind, are equally obvious. Social esteem would appear to be more of an issue in "honor" cultures, group harmony more so in interdependent cultures, and so on. Most noticeable are differences due to the concerns consisting of the presence and integrity of a particular object or symbol: one's God, the Flag, one's Leader, one's holy places, or observance of given rituals.

Event coding and concerns obviously are closely related. Events involving objects of concern like those mentioned—the Leader, the Flag—are coded accordingly. Demeaning the Flag is coded as an insult, as is an attack on the Leader as a terrorist act, only because respecting the Flag and the Leader represent concerns.

The Notion of Focality

Events, as coded, differ in focality. Event types are supposed to become focal when they represent socially well-defined and generally shared concerns. Culturally focal events are events that are an important subject of daily discourse. An example of a focal event type in White American culture is that of situations involving success (D'Andrade, 1984): "In American culture, success is a personal characteristic of great importance to most people. Such daily events as the organization of daily effort, the evaluation of task performance, and the marking of accomplishment through self-announcement and the congratulations of others are closely attended to and much discussed" (p. 95). Other examples of focal events are those involving honor or threats to honor in Bali or among the Bedouins, descriptions of which can be found in the ethnographic liter-

ature (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Black-Michaud, 1975; Keeler, 1983; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992).

Culturally, focal concerns are likely to draw attention to the events affecting them and to yield cultural "expertise" on such events. This may lead to less uncertainty and finer discriminations, the events may be represented in greater detail, and more different features may be distinguished with a high degree of availability. We thus assume that the representation of focal event types is well structured, which implies that in a given culture clear norms exist on how to interpret these events and how to respond to them. Focality would seem to be related to the degree to which emotions are socially embedded in the given culture; cultures appear to differ in this regard. It is likely that emotional events are more focal or that focal event types are more numerous when the culture considers emotions to be of social rather than of individual concern. Since focality implies that clear norms do exist about how to interpret relevant events, people in such cultures are likely to experience more certainty in their interpretations. An emotional reaction to a particular event is appraised as "obvious" if it seems to the subject to be imposed by the event rather than being the result of some subjective assessment or behavioral preference. Obviousness of particular components of emotions is likely to exclude their being reconsidered or put into question because alternative interpretations of the situation or alternative reactions are inconceivable. Thus, one would expect the focality of event types to enhance the obviousness of emotional situations.

This is in fact what we have found in our previously mentioned study (Mesquita, 1993). As alluded to, there is evidence that emotions are most socially embedded in the Turkish group and least so in the autochthonous Dutch group. Therefore, we expected that the meaning of emotional events would be perceived as most obvious by the Turkish respondents and least so by the Dutch, with the Surinamese lying between them. As described before, subjects were asked to report an emotional experience that fitted the description of a given type of situation and to answer questions about the emotional experience. Three questions referred to the obviousness of the situation's meaning. The first question asked whether another person would consider the situation as pleasant or as

unpleasant, as the respondent had; the second question asked whether another person would think and feel in a similar way when in the respondent's position; and the third question asked whether another person would react as the respondent had. Subjects were offered three answer alternatives: no, somewhat, and yes. Because many of the respondents were unable to answer the question, we created a fourth, "don't know" answer category. Examples of answers in this category are "I don't know," "Every person is different," "It depends on the kind of person," "What a stupid question," and "How could I know?" Taking the different situation types together, such an answer was given by 16% of the Dutch, 10% of the Surinamese, and none of the Turkish respondents.

The answer categories were treated as points on an ordinal scale ranging from "I don't know" to "yes." We thus considered answers in the "don't know" category as standing for less obviousness than the "no" answers. The results, split out by type of situation, are presented in Table 2. As expected, we found the most obviousness in the Turkish group and the least in the Dutch group. Although the Dutch respondents did think, on the average, that other people would find the situations as pleasant or as unpleasant as they had, in three of the five situations, they thought so to a lesser extent than did those in the Surinamese and the Turkish groups. The Dutch respondents did not assume that another person would think, feel, or react as they had. The putative consequence of this lack of obviousness in the Dutch group is that there is more reconsideration and regulation of emotional responses. In another of our studies, which used structured interviews, Dutch respondents spontaneously reported, more frequently than respondents from the other two cultural groups, to have hesitated about the meaning of the situation (Mesquita, 1993). Similar hesitations may be expected with regard to other emotional components than appraisal.

The emotional situations appeared to have the largest number of "obvious" implications for the Turkish group. Not only did the Turkish respondents, on the average, expect other people to think and feel as they had under similar circumstances, they assumed that other people would also behave as they had. The answers of the Surinamese group fell in between the other two. Surinamese assumed obviousness with regard to

TABLE 2
Cultural Differences in the Felt "Obviousness" of the Situation's Meaning

	Dutch	Surinamese	Turkish	
Situation 1: People complimented you on something or showed admiration toward you.	(n = 30)	(n = 29)	(n = 24)	F
Another person would find it as pleasant as I did.	2.0	2.5	2.7	*
Another person would think and feel as I did.	1.4	2.0	2.6	**
Another person would react as I did.	1.8	1.4	2.4	**
Situation 2: You had success because of some socially recognized accomplishment or achievement.	(n = 27)	(n = 30)	(n = 30)	F
Another person would find it as pleasant as I did.	2.7	2.8	2.8	
Another person would think and feel as I did.	1.9	2.4	2.8	**
Another person would react as I did.	1.8	1.8	2.7	**
Situation 3: An acquaintance, a neighbor, or colleague offended you, did not take you seriously, or was inconsiderate toward you.	(n = 29)	(n = 27)	(n = 30)	F
Another person would find it as unpleasant as I did.	2.3	2.8	2.9	*
Another person would think and feel as I did.	1.6	2.5	2.8	**
Another person would react as I did.	1.6	1.6	2.4	**
Situation 4: Your partner, an intimate friend, or a close relative offended you, did not take you seriously, or was inconsiderate toward you.	(n = 30)	(n = 26)	(n = 22)	F
Another person would find it as unpleasant as I did.	2.4	2.9	2.8	*
Another person would think and feel as I did.	1.6	2.3	2.8	**
Another person would react as I did.	1.3	1.6	2.2	**
Situation 5: Your partner, an intimate friend, or a close relative treated you unfairly or improperly.	(n = 27)	(n = 30)	(n = 30)	F
Another person would find it as unpleasant as I did.	2.6	2.7	2.9	
Another person would think and feel as I did.	2.2	2.3	2.8	*
Another person would react as I did.	1.8	2.0	2.4	

Note. Means of 3-point rating scales: 1 = no, 2 = somewhat, 3 = yes.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

thoughts and feelings, but not with regard to the reactions elicited by an event. These results support the hypothesis that social embedding of emotions leads to an increased sense that the meaning and implications of particular events were more or less fixed, objective facts.

The focality of event types may have yet another effect. Focal event types may be expected to be highly available. This means that focal events never remain unnoticed by the individual. When such events occur, the individual can hardly escape being emotionally unaffected. It also means that events that affect the focal concern only remotely (events distant in space or time) are recognized as instances of the event type.

The anthropological literature provides evidence that supports these expectations. For instance, in some cultures, the danger of losing one's dignity or honor is of great concern. Thus, situations bearing upon one's dignity are focal, and emotions related to shame are likely to ensure in these situations. Not only are situations in which dignity or honor is actually offended considered to be shameful, but also situations that involve the possibility of such an offense. They motivate the individual to do whatever is needed to protect his or her dignity or honor from being compromised. For example, on Bali and Java, many situations are interpreted as threats to status and, thereby, as shame situations: "A person fears that he will compromise that status by proving incapable of demonstrating it in his own gestures and more importantly, in the gestures of others" (Keeler, 1983, p. 163). Because status is not a stable property, it has to be settled continuously in the encounters with other people. If others' gestures and speech are rude and demeaning, that fact signals the inadequacy of one's own status or the likelihood of such inadequacy, which gives rise to the emotion called *lek* on Bali and *isin* on Java. Both concepts are translated as falling within the shame or embarrassment domain (for more examples, see Mesquita & Frijda, 1992).

Emotions like *lek* and *isin* are present in Western culture as well. Self-exposure, other people's lack of respect, and encounters with more important persons elicit similar emotions of shyness, shame, or embarrassment. However, these eliciting situations are not focal ones in Western culture. They are less well-defined and are not consistently categorized as shame situations. Shame receives considerably less explicit attention

and cultural recognition; it is, as Scheff (1988b, p. 400) called it, a "low visibility" emotion. Shame is not usually expressed in a conspicuous manner and has no extensive social consequences. Shame (or the existence of shame situations) is not much talked about; there is no clear script about what an ashamed person should do.

The high availability of focal event types does not necessarily imply that they or the concomitant emotions occur frequently. On the contrary, focal events may be so aversive that their anticipation arouses active avoidance behavior, as may be illustrated by the fear of assault in elderly people, which prevents them from going out at night, thus making such assaults infrequent. In fact, because the function of emotions like shame and guilt is to prevent them from occurring (see below), the instances of shame and guilt may be rare especially where they are important. Even mildly relevant situations may be recognized as instances of a particular focal event type and signal the possibility of a central issue of concern that, in turn, may lead to their avoidance. The anthropological literature provides pertinent examples. According to Briggs (1970), angry thoughts and acts are considered to be dangerous by the Utku Eskimos. It is felt that angry people are always likely to lose control; they may ultimately commit murder and, thus, are frightening. Anger situations appear to be extremely focal in Utku culture even though they are rare or absent. They are so rare that they do not even get the opportunity to elicit emotions.

In fact, the major emotional effect of the focality of emotionally charged event types may not be found in manifestations of the corresponding emotion at all, but it may be found in other aspects of emotionality. Insofar as negatively charged events are concerned, the phenomena can be expected to correspond to what is the usual result of emotion avoidance or suppression: emotional inhibition and unspontaneity in interpersonal interactions, anxiety and depression, and emotional outbursts. For example, the focality of shame or *isin* leads to the formality, reserve, or polite friendliness known from descriptions of the Awlad 'Ali (Abu-Lughod, 1986) or the Javanese (Keeler, 1983) and may be a contributor to the rage outbursts of *amok* (Averill, 1982); the abhorrence of bodily contact with menstruating Oriya women leads to reticence and occasional fear (Shweder, 1991). These are a few examples of how

focality may be emotionally manifest in less direct or less immediate ways and places.

Emotions in Social Interaction

In our analysis, emotions are not only intraindividual states but also forms of subject–environment interaction. This interaction may remain latent when the emotion is only a state of readiness; but even then, it is readiness for engaging in or breaking off interaction. By this very nature of readiness for and actual form of interaction, emotions exert influence on social interaction. In addition, many emotions are social events because they tend to occur in a context of socially shared meanings. They are recognized by others, they shed light upon the emotional relevance of the environment, they affect interpersonal relationships, and they in turn evoke responses from others that also affect the relationship from their side.

Considering these pronounced social roles of emotions, one may expect considerable cultural differences with regard to the force of their expression, the focality of the events that may elicit them, and the frequency of their occurrence. Social structures and cultural values influence which social interactional effects are tolerated, expected, rewarded, or tabooed and, by consequence, to what extent corresponding emotions are discouraged, encouraged, or even shaped by the cultural environment. There is ample evidence in this regard and in particular with regard to emotions with the clearest social repercussions. Desire for revenge, shame, grief, and guilt emotion all show strong intercultural differences and are emotions for which certain cultures have elaborate rules or rituals. Revenge is an issue with an almost formalized place in the society of some Balkan countries and of the Berbers of North Africa (Black-Michaud, 1975); in Western cultures, it is almost entirely an individual, private, and mostly tabooed affair, except in subcultures of violence (Jacoby, 1983). Guilt emotion has been prominent in seventeenth-century Dutch Protestant and American Puritan society and has been important in those societies until recently (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). We have already mentioned shame as being focal in certain Muslim societies. Grief is an emo-

tion that commands explicit rituals on Bali, as it did in precommunist China (Granet, 1922), whereas formalized occasions for expressing or stylizing grief are nearly absent in present-day Western societies (Aries, 1974; Elias, 1982).

Interactional Functions of Emotions

Emotions involve the subject's appraisal of particular events as positive or negative. Perceiving someone's emotion, therefore, indicates to the observer the presence of an object or event that is being so appraised. Usually, emotions involve additional aspects, and convey those to observers: the subject's power position with respect to the agent in the event, for instance; his or her self-assuredness with respect to his or her power to cope; his or her degree of being in control or of helplessness. Features such as these are part of the secondary appraisal structures and may be reflected in the emotional response. That emotion is picked up by observers, and that this includes important aspects of the subject's appraisals has several important social implications.

First, someone's emotion indicates to others the emotional potential of the situation. Emotions tend to define events to other individuals as emotionally valent ones, or they strengthen such a definition if it already existed. They show the event to possess emotion-arousing properties. My fear indicates to others the presence of something frightening; my disgust defines an object as potentially disgusting and may instigate in others a search for the disgusting attributes; my anger shows its object to be at least potentially offensive. Emotions in others may be considered to form major sources for learning the emotional valence of objects and events, in addition to the emotional outcomes of direct confrontations with objects and events; the work by Campos on social referencing in infancy showed how actively such emotional information can be sought (e.g., Klinnert, Campos, & Emde, 1986). Second, someone's emotions indicate to others whether the subject's appraisal conformed to the norms or deviated from them. Third, they are often of interest not merely in indicating the presence of a particular kind of event with a particular kind of emotional valence, but in defining the subject's social position and role within one's social structure. Grief defines one as a beaten or a bereft

person, joy as a victorious and self-confident one. In many cultural contexts, we think, people's emotions are felt to define such roles and positions, both in the eyes of the subjects themselves, and in those of their environment. Emotions (i.e., many emotions) are social facts that continuously elaborate the network of social roles and relationships. The significance of emotions does not merely exist for the subject. It exists just as strongly for the social environment. A classical example, of course, was Jean Briggs being ostracized by her Utku group after a repeated show of anger (Briggs, 1970). A more detailed example comes from Schieffelin's (1983) study of the Papua New Guinea Kaluli:

> As anger is the extreme expression of the posture of assertion, grief is the extreme posture of vulnerability and appeal .... For our purpose, it is important to point out that though anger and grief show the greatest possible contrast in the projection of power versus vulnerability in the projection of self in a situation, they are alike in the context of reciprocity in that both are the result of loss and contain the implication that they are entitled to redress. Anger claims it with a demand for compensation or a move towards vengeance, while grief waits upon the compassion of others to provide it. (pp. 187–188)

As we said, an emotion shows the eliciting event as an emotion-consonant one. A particular remark is understood as an insult when heard in conjunction with the receiver's anger; the same remark may be understood in a different context as a joke. Children learn respect from the respect of their elders, as they do their hatreds, fears, and things to enjoy. Social transmission of animal fears has been demonstrated in the phobia literature (e.g., Rachman, 1990). Emotions are among the prime means for the transmission of socially shared meanings. They may even be the means of choice. Emotional charge has, of old, been one of the "laws of association" (Woodworth, 1938): Associations accompanied by emotion are assumed to be learned more rapidly. But in addition, emotional expressions of others involved in an emotionally significant incident may confer upon those incidents an emotional impact for the observer. It may be argued that expression of emotions in others is one of the major factors for rendering information emotionally salient (Frijda, 1993b).

However, the social functions of emotions go deeper and, in some cases, appear to be essential to the very existence of those emotions. Apart from signaling the relevance of events, emotions instigate socially relevant behavior: sharing and bonding behaviors, corrective behaviors, and the like. In some cases, instigating such behaviors appears to be the *raison d'être* of the emotions concerned. Many emotions appear to be basically social in nature, not so much because of what elicits them, but because of what they motivate the subject to do or not to do.

The clearest example again is anger. Anger is elicited primarily by social objects that are felt to act by wilful intent; and angry behavior is designed to act upon the offender by social means. The backbone of angry behavior consists of what animal studies call *bluffing behavior*, which is meant to intimidate. Shouting, foot-stamping, hair-raising, smashing objects, are all shows of power that effectively frighten conspecifics or others, although they may anger some of them. The facial display of anger contains a "fierce glance" (glowering, fixed stare with eyes widened and brows drawn downward; Ekman & Friesen, 1975) that again is best understood as a menace or an intimidation display, considering its effects on others, in humans as well as in subhuman primates (Van Hooff, 1972). Actual fighting is only one of the types of behavior elicited by the broad category of frustrative and harm-inducing conditions and is absent as a response to most of these (Averill, 1982).

Considering the eliciting conditions and subsequent behavior, most instances of anger do not have the ultimate aim to hurt the offender but to punish him or her, that is, to correct his or her behavior. Many instances of anger concern noncompeting group members, often close kin. Clearly, one of the functions of anger is that of social correction to ensure standard-conforming behavior (Averill, 1982).

This applies to animals as well as humans. Many chimpanzee-threats aim at keeping lower placed group members in their place (de Waal, 1982). This points to a second social function of anger, which is to regulate power relationships. Among humans, this latter function is most clearly noticeable in the desire for revenge. Vengeance and desire for revenge are widespread, if not universal, even in societies in which revenge is not institutionalized. As a deliberate strategy, it is a type of action designed to promote cooperation in situations that, in the short run, may favor

competition (Axelrod, 1984). As an emotional urge, it seems to serve as a deterrent for the repetition of abuse of power and, thereby, at maintaining power superiority or at restoring the power balance (Frijda, 1993a).

There is an entire array of emotions that, in some way or other, serve as regulators of social relationships. Shyness is one of these. Recently, a proposal was made to consider shyness as a social distinctiveness display (Gomperts, 1992). That is, shyness can be considered as the emotion precipitated by the perception of superiority of others in social rank or of distinctiveness in a social role (e.g., formerly, in gender relationships). The manifestations of shyness, notably blushing, may serve to signal recognition of the social distinction and inhibitory control of interrank or interrole behavior. From that angle, even stage fright may not be just anxiety at being judged but a display controlling social presumption. Interestingly, some evidence has been adduced that, among social phobics, issues of social climbing are more pronounced than among agoraphobics or normal controls (Gomperts, 1992). Social shyness appears to be valued positively in societies that value social distinctions, and negatively where social distinctions are frowned upon (Gomperts, 1992; Shweder, in press). Another social-regulatory emotion is envy. Envy acts to equalize accumulated possessions among members of a closely knit group from the side of the envious; fear of envy does so from the side of the potential subject of envy.

Other emotions have different sorts of social functions. Their purpose seems to be mainly to prevent their occurrence; it is their anticipation that serves as a deterrent rather than their motivation of socially valuable action (although they may do that too).

One of these emotions is grief. Grief elicits giving off distress calls that motivate the lost object to come in search of the subject. In addition, as Averill (1968) and Bowlby (1969) argued, grief motivates search for the lost object by the subject. Anticipation of grief or the excitement that is its initial state motivates one to remain close to the attachment figure. Generally speaking, grief and its anticipation motivate bond-strengthening and bond-maintaining behavior.

Another emotion with an obvious social function is shame. As with grief and desire for revenge, the emotion is most powerful through one's efforts to prevent it from occurring. It motivates norm-conforming be-

havior under its low-intensity forms of embarrassment, uneasiness, or *gêne* as it is called in French (Scheff, 1988a). Norm conformity may not be the most general designation for the aim of shame. More generally, emotional discomfort is elicited by any signal of possible exclusion from the group that can be attributed to some of one's properties or ways of behavior (Frijda, 1993b; Terwijn, 1993). Such signals lead to hiding behavior or to efforts to hide the relevant property (Scheff, 1988b). Norm deviation is only one of such properties; being a boy called Christophorus may be a reason for shame when one's classmates single it out as being ridiculous; being a child having red hair often does, too, as it provides a target for teasing and mockery. One's own behavior that deviates from one's own norms, from the self scheme or from explicit group norms, is only a later development and, we assume, a culture-bound one. Of course, one may argue that, for true shame, some notion of the self and of norms is necessary; but this argues only about the definition of the concept and not about the condition for an emotion that involves misery because of actual, assumed, or feared rejection by the group, and the instigation of hiding behavior.

Shame stimulates behavior that leads to acceptance by the group, in addition to stimulating behavior that flees group rejection; agreeing with the group norm is one of these behaviors (Frijda, 1993b; Terwijn, 1993). Therefore, it may be viewed as stimulating group cohesion. The emotions governing animosity toward other groups (e.g., distrust, hatred, contempt, derision) and investing in group identity obviously do the same.

The dynamics of shame obviously reach further, but they are beyond the scope of this chapter. We may suggest that shame caused by the behavior of one's kin serves group cohesion by the repair behaviors that it motivates (e.g., making up for the debts incurred by a family member). Other forms of shame reflect loss of status and belong to the emotions regulating the power relationships discussed previously.

A final emotion to be discussed is guilt. Emotions exist that are caused by the awareness of having caused discomfort or harm in someone else. Subjects refer to that emotion as "feeling guilty." As an example of such a constellation, we mention the long-lasting distress caused by having accidentally killed a child who suddenly crossed the street in front of

one's car. It is important to note that no guilt in a legal sense or actual sense of being to blame needs to be involved. In fact, in an interview study in which 42 subjects were asked to describe experiences of guilt feelings and to answer questions about these experiences, 58% of the subjects blamed themselves although they also knew that they did not directly; 35% considered someone else to have been the cause, and 46% the victim to have been responsible (the percentages refer to overlapping groups of subjects). Nearly half of the subjects (43%) felt guilty because of unintended harm done to others (e.g., feeling guilty because of mother's distress at the subject having left home to marry; Kroon, 1988). McGraw (1987) also found unintentional harm to lead to stronger guilt feelings than intentional harm. Rarely, in only 33% of Kroon's sample, was the guilt feeling caused by behavior that could be described as conflicting with moral norms or as neglect. Also, guilt emotion does not necessarily reflect awareness of having transgressed some norm but, rather, having behaved carelessly, or having caused loss of love, or both. Considering these data, guilt emotion appears indeed to follow from the mere fact of having unintentionally caused harm in someone else, in many cases combined with the fact of being submitted to reproaches from the victim or others or of having been left by the victim.

Guilt emotion in most cases leads to a desire to make up for the harm done (73%), to ask forgiveness (60%), to want to talk about it with the victim (73%), or to submit to the victim's wishes (54%; Kroon, 1988). The conclusion seems warranted that guilt emotion is not a mere feeling, but an interpersonal attitude motivating corrective behavior. Such an emotion appears to be highly functional socially (Baumeister et al., in press). Anticipation of the distress motivates carefulness in behavior involving others and, particularly, involving close relationships. Guilt emotion is a cautionary emotion. The moral guilt feelings that are usually considered paradigmatic would, as with shame, seem to be particular developments growing out of a much more elementary distress at having been the cause of unwanted distress (Hoffman, 1984).

Talking of the social functions of these emotions might seem to imply that the emotions exist *to fulfill* these regulatory social functions. We indeed believe that this is the case. One may say that certain forms

of anger, shame, grief, and guilt emotion exist for the sake of ensuring or facilitating these social regulations. What this means is that particular emotional sensitivities exist for those purposes. Grief presupposes an emotional sensitivity to loss; socially corrective anger presupposes sensitivity for normal transgression in others; shame presupposes sensitivity for group exclusion; and guilt presupposes sensitivity for distress in close others and for one's causal role in that. All this is plausible (the sensitivities constitute concerns) and quite functional. The functions ultimately reside both in preventing punishment to the individual subject (such as retaliation by someone carelessly treated) and in maintaining the well-functioning and integrity of the group.

Social Sharing

There is one additional link between emotions and social interaction. Individuals often communicate their own emotional experiences and discuss them with others in a relationship and, as a consequence, these experiences become *socially shared.* Western European subjects were found to have discussed their emotional experiences with at least one other person in about 90% of the emotional incidents reported (Rimé, Mesquita, Philippot, & Boca, 1991). The social environment is thus quite often involved in the emotions of the individual.

To the extent that emotional events are felt to be of concern to the social group, we should expect social sharing to consist of more than just being receptive to the information conveyed. When emotional events are socially significant, other people are likely to feel affected by what has happened and to feel a common responsibility for coping with the situation. Thus, they may help to find solutions for problems or to join in the celebration of fortunate events. In "interdependent" cultures, therefore, one may expect the social environment to be more committed to the individual's emotions, and the character of social sharing may be expected to differ between cultures.

This is in fact what we found in our previously described research (Mesquita, 1993) in which we compared Dutch, Surinamese, and Turkish groups living in The Netherlands and confirmed that social sharing is more social in character in the more interdependent Turkish and Suri-

namese cultures than in the more independently oriented Dutch. Subjects were asked whether they had talked with other people about the reported emotion incident. They were provided with two lists of items to check: one list mentioning behaviors that they themselves might have shown, and another list mentioning possible behaviors of the sharing partner. Turkish and Surinamese respondents, much more frequently than the Dutch ones, indicated having asked for active involvement of the sharing partner or having behaved in a way that presupposed such active involvement. Also, on the whole, the Turkish and Surinamese sharing partners seemed to have lived up to these expectations of commitment; the Turkish and Surinamese subjects indicated more often than the Dutch that their sharing partners had in fact shown active involvement, in particular in situations in which someone else had behaved unpleasantly toward the subject.

The precise situation profiles are items 3, 4, and 5 from Table 2. In negative situations like these, all groups showed about equal frequencies of social sharing: 87% of the Dutch, 81% of the Surinamese, and 84% of the Turks. However, the character of sharing differed, as shown by the data in Table 3. Cultural differences appear in asking support, in asking favors, and in warning the sharing partner. As was expected, the Dutch respondents reported fewer such socially engaging behaviors. Parallel results were obtained with regard to the reported behaviors of the respondents' sharing partners. Few differences were found with regard to their showing understanding or sympathy. The most pronounced differences occurred in advice, in coping assistance, and in the sharing partner otherwise taking an active role. In the Dutch group, the sharing partner showed fewer signs of active commitment than those in the other two cultural groups. There were some other detailed findings indicating that the fine grain of emotion sharing behaviors is where cultural differences are found. The Turkish group, for instance, showed less understanding than the other two groups (66%, as compared with 94% and 87%; $\chi^2 < .01$), but agreed somewhat more with the respondents' view of the event. Most likely, the difference is due to the more fixed, socially defined meanings of relevant events among the Turkish people than among the other groups.

TABLE 3
Sharing Behaviors During First Instances of Social Sharing

	Dutch	Surinamese	Turkish	
Providing information	(n = 85)	(n = 69)	(n = 68)	χ^2
I told exactly what happened.	82	83	79	
I told how I felt.	76	81	84	
I told what I thought about the actor.	85	86	79	
Soliciting an opinion				
I asked the other person what I should do.	27	32	35	
I asked the other person's opinion about what had happened.	55	65	66	
Actively involving the other person				
I asked the other person to support me or side with me.	21	22	46	**
I asked the other person to do me a favor.	6	78	26	**
I warned the other person about the actor.	5	26	28	**

Note. Entries represent percentage of respondents who indicated to have behaved in the way mentioned.
**$p < .01$.

Conclusion

Emotions have a variety of social functions. These functions derive in part from their very nature as emotions, namely, that of involving states of action readiness and of readiness or unreadiness to engage in interaction with the environment: Joy tends to open up, grief to shut off, and anger to be antagonistic. Other functions derive from the fact that social partners recognize these states of action readiness, undergo the effects of the behaviors that spring from them or expect to do so, and are alerted by them to emotional meanings in the shared environment.

The major social functions of emotions, as we have seen, are (a) modifying interindividual interactions in accordance with what appears to be important at the moment: establishing or breaking contact, self-protecting, accepting, removing or rejecting, as this seems indicated by the meaning of the environmental (or imagined or conceived) events and the valence of other persons; (b) regulating the balance of power, by threats of retaliation (as in anger) or by submission and conformity (as through shame and guilt emotion); (c) determining general patterns of

social interaction, such as help-seeking (as in grief), proximity seeking (as in affection or as in grief or its anticipation), and carefulness with regard to others (as in guilt emotion); and (d) representing and motivating social cohesion (as in the social sharing of emotion).

The emotions that emerge are, in large measure, influenced by the immediate social environment and the cultural context. The social environment presents feedback to one's emotions, causing or strengthening emotion regulation, in both the attenuating and the encouraging sense of the concept of regulation, apart of course from providing causes and targets for the emotions as such. It also provides emotional meanings of objects and events, by the manifestations of emotions by its members. The cultural context provides meanings of objects and types of events at a larger and more fixed scale, in rules of behavior, feeling rules, and the prefabricated concepts for coding these events. It does so in particular by establishing the focality of certain emotionally significant event types that represent recurrent themes in the social life of the cultural group concerned.

There are several ways in which emotions fulfill these social functions; emotions play different social roles. First, they ensure the social transmission of emotional interpretations of events. They convey to others the meaning that an individual perceives in these events; these meanings include one's relationship to the event and to relevant others. Emotions can be seen as social statements about the situation, about oneself, and about other people. These social statements may lead to transmission of the emotion itself and of the emotional reaction, as when anger spreads through a group of people. Second, as already indicated, emotions tend to lead to behavior that influences others and that may be meant to do so, either unwittingly, because evolution shapes some behavior for communicative purposes (as when crying, smiling, or looking angrily), or more strategically (as when a show of suffering elicits feelings of guilt in others). Third, emotions tend to elicit reactions in others, either the ones that are meant to be elicited or other ones, like retaliation or approval, that stem from the recipients' own standards, interests, and emotions. These reactions are among the sources of emotion regulation as well as among the instruments for learning emotional meanings. Fourth, emotions being

based in part upon socially determined event codings help to maintain these codings and the common emotional definition of the environment.

The social functions of emotions are not added onto the emotions as a secondary consequence of primarily intraindividual events. We may say that emotions have become intraindividual events only secondarily, after having been turned into states of experienced readiness rather than being states of readiness ready to translate into action. Emotions are not only social; one interacts with the physical as well as with the social environment. The social environment, however, is the dominant one in present societies and probably has always been so for the human species.

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